

[CLAIMS]

What is claimed is:

- 1 *Sub 1* 1. An X-strap assembly for securing an article of footwear to the instep of a
 2 foot, said footwear having a sole and channel through said sole, said strap assembly
 3 comprising:
 4 a) a strap attached at its respective ends to medial and lateral heel
 5 sides of said footwear, said strap having a first portion extending in a forward
 6 direction transversely across the instep from a first side of said footwear to a second
 7 side, a second portion extending through said channel, and a third portion extending in
 8 a rearward direction transversely across the instep from said instep from said second
 9 side to said first side of said footwear, said first and said third portions forming an X-
 10 configuration over said instep; and
 11 b) a fastener attached to said strap.

- 1 2. An article of footwear, comprising:
 2 a) a sole, the sole having a midfoot portion and a heel portion;
 3 b) a channel extending transversely across the midfoot portion of said
 4 sole and at least partly under said sole;
 5 c) an instep strap connected to said heel portion of said sole, said strap
 6 having a first portion extending in a forward direction transversely across a wearer's
 7 instep from one side of said sole to the other, a second portion extending through said
 8 channel and slidable within said channel, and a third portion extending in a rearward
 9 direction transversely across the wearer's instep from said other side to said one side
 10 of said sole, the first and third portions of said strap forming an X configuration over
 11 the wearer's instep, and the second portion being between the first and third portions
 12 of said strap; and
 13 d) an adjustable fastener attached to said strap for adjusting said
 14 strap.

3. An article of footwear as in claim 2, wherein said midfoot portion of said
 sole includes a shank, said shank at least partly underlying said sole, said shank being
 stiffer than said sole, said channel extending through said shank.

1 4. An article of footwear, as in claim 3, wherein said channel is angled
2 downwardly from rear to front in a longitudinal direction;

1 5. An article of footwear as in claim 4 further comprising a heel portion strap
2 assembly, a forefoot strap assembly and a lateral strap extending therebetween.

1 6. A footwear product to be worn by a user on the user's foot, comprising:
2 a) a sole;
3 b) a transverse passageway extending through said sole; and
4 c) a strap system configured to secure the footwear product to the user's
5 foot including:
6 a heel portion,
7 an X-strap assembly coupled to said heel portion, wherein said X-strap
8 assembly includes a continuous strap having a first portion extending transversely
9 across the user's instep from a first side of the footwear to a second side, a second
10 portion extending through said transverse passageway, and a third portion extending
11 transversely across the user's instep from said second side to said first side of said
12 footwear, said first and said third portions of said X-strap assembly forming an
13 X-configuration over the user's instep, and
14 an adjustable fastener for adjusting the length of said X-strap assembly.

1 7. A sole having a forefoot, heel, and midfoot therebetween, comprising:
2 a) a foot shaped sole piece of a polymer compound of selected hardness;
3 and
4 b) a shank within the midfoot of said sole piece and bridging between
5 the forefoot and heel, said shank having a higher hardness than said sole piece, and
6 said shank being integrally fused to said sole piece.

8. A sole as in claim 7, wherein said sole is a sandal sole.

9. A sole as in claim 7, wherein said shank has a bottom surface with a longitudinal groove, and said outsole has a longitudinal bridge portion seated within said groove.

10. A sole as in claim 7, further comprising a traverse channel extending through said shank.

11. A sole as in claim 7, wherein said shank has a hardness of about 20 to 30 Shore C greater than said sole piece.

12. A sole as in claim 11, wherein said sole piece and said shank are molded from different color compounds.

13. A sole as in claim 12, wherein said shank has a channel therethrough for movably passing a strap.

14. An article of footwear comprising:

- a) a foot shaped sole piece having a medial and a lateral side; and
- b) a shank integrally molded in said sole piece, said shank having a hardness greater than the hardness of said sole piece, said shank extending substantially from said sole lateral side to said sole medial side, said shank having a transverse channel adapted to movably pass a strap therethrough.

15. An article of footwear as in claim 14, further comprising an x-strap assembly at least a portion of which extends through said channel.